



Jesus, the Resurrection and the Life

Lesson 17 John 11:1-46

REVIEW

1. In last week's lesson, we saw Jesus as the Promised Shepherd as He came to the Jews just as the Old Testament prophets foretold.
 2. We saw Him clearly as the powerful Shepherd who is able to keep the sheep secure, expound the scripture, and overcome the crowd that wanted to take Him.
 3. Christ also proved to be the Preeminent Shepherd as people saw His uniqueness and power and believed on Him.
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LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. We will study the events surrounding the resurrection of Lazarus with emphasis on the reactions of Christ, the resurrection of Lazarus, and the response of the crowd who witnessed this miracle.
 2. We will see Jesus as God once again in the sixth "I Am" statement, *"I am the resurrection, and the life"*.
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THE STORM BEFORE THE CALM (11:1-16)

A. Background - 11:1-2

11:1 "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)"

1. Location

- a. Town of Bethany - 11:1
- b. Approximately two miles southeast of Jerusalem - 11:18

11:18 "Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:"

2. Encounters with Christ

a. Past Encounter - Luke 10:38-42

- i. Jesus went to their house
- ii. *"Martha was cumbered about much serving"* - Luke 10:40
- iii. *"Mary sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word"* - Luke 10:39
- iv. Martha asked Jesus to make Mary help her serve - Luke 10:40
- v. Jesus' answer, *"Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her"* - Luke 10:42

b. Future encounter - John 12:1-11; Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9

- i. This is *"that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair"* - 11:2, 12:3
- ii. She did so to prepare the Lord's body for burial - 12:7

B. Word of the storm reaches Jesus - 11:3

11:3 “Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

1. Jesus’ location

- a. Jesus had left Jerusalem and is in Bethabara near the Jordan River at the place where John the Baptist first baptized - **10:40, 1:28**
- b. Bethabara is approximately 9-10 miles east of Jerusalem

2. The storm described

- a. Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus, “*Lord, behold, he [Lazarus] whom thou lovest is sick*” - **11:3**
- b. “*Lord*” is used to express “he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord”¹
- c. The word “*lovest*” is “*phileo*” in the Greek, which means “to love as a friend.”²
- d. “*Sick*” means “ill”

C. Jesus’ response to the message - 11:4-15

1. Divine Understanding - 11:4

11:4 “When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

- a. “*This sickness is not unto death*” means “death in the final issue, to remain dead.”³
- b. This sickness was “*for the glory of God*”. All that the Son did was to this end. - **9:3**
- c. That the Son of God, as God, might be glorified

2. Love - 11:5

11:5 “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.”

- a. “*Agape*” love or deep fondness
- b. It is possible that John recorded this thought so the reader might understand Christ’s third response - **11:6**

3. He didn’t come - 11:6

11:6 “When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.”

- a. He stayed in Bethabara for two more days
- b. It seems as though He did not respond to their request when, in fact, He did. His response was to wait where He was.

4. The reasons for His actions revealed to the disciples - 11:7-15

- a. He told His disciples to go with Him into Judea again - **11:7**

11:7 “Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.”

- b. Opposition by disciples, “Lord, the reason we came here was because the Jews wanted to kill you” - **11:8, 7:1, 10:39**

11:8 “His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?”

¹ Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 365, ref. 2962.

² A.T. Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, Vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), 193.

³ *Ibid.*, 194.

c. Jesus reminds them that He must work - 11:9-10

11:9 “Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. **10** But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”

- i. The “*day*” is a reference to Christ’s presence in physical, bodily form on the earth. The “*night*” is a reference to the time when He would leave the earth. Jesus used similar language to describe His miraculous work with the blind man. - 9:4
- ii. “Jesus was stressing that as long as He was on earth doing God’s will, even at this late time in His ministry, He would safely complete God’s purposes.”⁴ The disciples were fearful of the Jews, but Jesus assures them of their safety as they walk with the Light of the World.

5. Divine understanding further revealed - 11:11-15

a. Jesus told them that Lazarus was sleeping - 11:11

11: 11 “These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.”

b. The disciples misunderstood what Jesus said - 11:12

11:12 “Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.”

c. He was speaking of Lazarus’ death - 11:13

11:13 “Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.”

d. Jesus told them plainly and clearly. He knew this without being there, which reveals His omniscience. - 11:14

11:14 “Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.”

e. Jesus gives the reason for Lazarus’ death, “That you might believe” - 11:15

11:15 “And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.”

D. Doubting Thomas, “Let us go and die with him” - 11:16

11:16 “Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

JESUS, THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE (11:17-44)

A. The sorrow caused by death - 11:17-38

1. At its core, death is separation. It is the result of sin in the world. It always hurts, and we are going to experience that here.

2. Lazarus had been dead for four days - 11:17

11:17 “Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.”

3. Mary and Martha still received comfort - 11:19

11:19 “And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.”

⁴ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, 1606.

4. Martha and Jesus - 11:20-28a

a. Martha's response to the word *"that Jesus was coming"* - 11:20

11:20 "Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house."

- i. She *"went"*
- ii. She *"met him"* (went to where He was)

b. The dialogue between Martha and Jesus

i. She brings her burden to Christ - 11:21

11:21 "Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

- a) Martha gave the reason why she had sent word to Jesus
- b) They had asked Jesus to come so this death could have been prevented
- c) This statement expresses her hurt in a tremendous way. She did not understand why Christ hadn't come to them when she sent word.

ii. She affirmed her faith in the power of Jesus - 11:22

11:22 "But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."

iii. Jesus' response, *"Thy brother shall rise again"* - 11:23

11:23 "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again."

iv. Martha misunderstands - 11:24

11:24 "Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

- a) She thought Jesus was speaking of Lazarus' ultimate resurrection that awaits those who are dead in Christ
- b) Her misunderstanding is understandable, as death seems final to us

v. Jesus, The Resurrection and the Life - 11:25-26

11:25 "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: **26** And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

- a) *"I am the resurrection...he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"*
- b) *"I am the Life...whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die"*
- c) *"Believest thou this?"*

vi. She affirmed her faith in the person of Christ - 11:27

11:27 "She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

c. Martha went to tell Mary - 11:28

11:28 "And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

- i. "The Master has come"
- ii. "He is calling for you"

5. Mary and Jesus - 11:29-32a

a. Mary's response to the word that Jesus was coming - 11:29-32a

11:29 "As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. **30** Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. **31** The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. **32a** Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet,"

i. She arose quickly and came to Him - 11:29, 11:20

ii. Jesus was where Martha had left Him - 11:30

iii. The Jews who were comforting her misunderstood the reason for her hasty exit
11:31

iv. She fell at Jesus' feet - 11:32a

b. The dialogue between Mary and Jesus - 11:32b-34

i. She brings her burden to Christ - 11:32b

11:32b "saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

a) Mary gave the reason why she had sent word to Jesus

b) Mary and Martha had talked about this (obvious from use of the same phrase in 11:21)

ii. Jesus is moved with compassion - 11:33-34

11:33 "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. **34** And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see."

a) He saw Mary weeping - 11:33

b) He saw the Jews weeping

c) "*He groaned in the spirit*". This "denotes violent agitation - not from anger but from grief. He saw the sorrow of others, and he was also moved with sympathy and love."⁵

d) He asked them where Lazarus was buried - 11:34

c. "*Jesus wept*". Death and sorrow affected Him, which shows His humanity - 11:35

11:35 "Jesus wept."

6. The Jews' wonder - 11:36-37

11:36 "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! **37** And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

a. At the depth of his love for Lazarus - 11:36

b. About why Jesus did not come and prevent this death - 11:37

⁵ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament*, Luke and John (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2005), 300.

B. The joy of life resurrected - 11:38-44

1. Jesus came to the grave, still groaning in His spirit - 11:38

11:38 “Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.”

2. Preparation for the miracle - 11:39-42

a. Jesus commanded them to take away the stone - 11:39

11:39 “Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.”

b. Martha was apprehensive - 11:39

c. Jesus reminded Martha of the purpose of this miracle. She would “see the glory of God” - 11:40

11:40 “Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

d. Division of labor

i. Jesus said, “Take ye away the stone.” - 11:39

ii. “They took away the stone” - 11:41a

11:41a “Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.”

e. Jesus prayed - 11:41b-42

11:41b “And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. **42** And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.”

i. Thanksgiving

a) “You have heard me” - 11:41

b) “You hear me always” - 11:42

ii. Request, “Do this so that these might believe”

iii. “You take away the stone, and I’ll raise the dead”

3. The miracle - 11:43-44

11:43 “And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. **44** And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.”

a. Jesus commanded Lazarus to come forth. Only God can bring the dead to life and speak to them. - 11:43

b. Lazarus obeyed - 11:44

c. Jesus told them to “Loose him, and let him go”

C. Their storm had now been calmed! The reason for God allowing this to happen in their lives was revealed right before their eyes!

THE RESPONSE TO THE MIRACLE (11:45-46)

11:45 “Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. **46** But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.”

- A. Some Jews believed. They saw what Jesus did because He had allowed Lazarus to die a death that was “*not unto death*”. - 11:45
- B. Some went and told the Pharisees - 11:46

LIFE LESSONS

1. Believe that Jesus has power over death and life!
2. When you don't understand your circumstances, or when it seems like God has not answered or if God answers in a way that you think is wrong, know that God has a purpose for your pain, which is to bring Him glory and bring others to the Savior.